

# Building Self-Esteem

## From birth to 3 years old

*Self-esteem is having respect and pride in oneself. Your child begins to develop these feelings in infancy.*

### Help Build Your Child's Self-Esteem

Many things affect self esteem. You can help your child have good self esteem by forming a strong, close bond with him.

### Respond To Your Baby's Needs

Responding to your baby's needs helps build a sense of trust and security.

- Pick up your newborn when he cries. You are showing your love. This will not spoil your baby.
- Your baby is sensitive to how you respond to his needs. Your tone of voice and look on your face will let your baby know if you enjoy spending time with him.
- Spend time holding, talking, singing, soothing and playing with your baby.

### Help Your Child Learn New Skills

As your child grows, he will do more and more on his own. Your child is building self-confidence.

- Have a safe place where your child can discover new things.
- Help your child learn new skills. Ask your child to help you with daily tasks.
- Be specific when you praise your child. For example, tell your child you really like it when he picks up his toys.

### Let Your Child Know You Love And Accept Him

- Spend time alone with your child. Show interest in what your child says and does.
- Take your child's feelings seriously.
- Show your love with words and hugs.
- Let your child know it is okay to make mistakes.

### Help Your Child Cope With Being Away From You

Your child will fear being away from you. This fear is called separation anxiety. Do not worry. This is a sign of the close bond you share. It usually begins around 7 months and peaks between 10 and 18 months. Help your child learn that you will return:

- Play peek-a-boo with your baby. This helps your baby learn that things come back after they've disappeared.
- Have your baby stay in a room alone for a little while. Make sure the room is safe. For example, do not follow when your baby crawls into another room. Wait a few minutes before going in.
- Always tell your child when you are leaving, why you are leaving and when you will be back. Be sure to return when you say you will. Do not linger after you say goodbye.



- Although your child can not tell time, say when you will return. For example, say you will be back after lunch.
- Show that you understand your child's feelings. Say, "I know you don't like it when I leave. I must go to the store but I will come back."
- Give your child a comfort item like a favorite toy.
- Spend time with your baby and the babysitter. It will be easier for your baby to get used to a new person if you are there.

- Try not to leave when your child is sick, sleepy or hungry.